215
312
406

A reservoir at Djaidh, part of the irrigation system for the date plantations

following p. 140 (d)

411

411 WEAPONS--striking and thrusting weapons (e.g., club, spear); missile weapons (e.g., boomerang, lance, harpoon, bola); complex projectile weapons (e.g., sling, bow and arrow, spearthrower, blowgun, firearms); other weapons employed in hunting, fowling, fishing, marine hunting, and animal husbandry; methods of gripping, striking, and hurling; arrow and dart poisons; etc. See also:

Manufacture of poisons	278	Decoration of weapons	531
Lashings and bindings	284	Specialized military weapons	713
Games with weapons	528	Shields	714

[Shi'hou]

563 The situation was getting a little out of hand. I seized Stanton
609 by the arm and urged him back towards the crevice up which we had come. Hardly had we reached the end of the valley when a dozen emaciated Arabs, with long beards, and rifles in their hands, suddenly appeared from behind a row of neam trees. They were slowly moving towards the entrance to the crevice, from which they must have watched us emerge, intent on cutting off our retreat. Before we could draw our revolvers one of them had fired his rifle, the bullet striking the rock cliff behind us.

Stanton yelled and dashed towards a hole in the rocks. We ran like hares to the cave, bullets spattering the rocks all round us, and reached the entrance just in time. We held a brief council of war and decided that, with a dozen rounds each, we could just about hold our own, since the cave was a natural fort and was better suited for defence than for attack. To our consternation the twelve *Shi'hou* were soon joined by about twenty more armed men who began to creep towards our hiding place. We realized that it was useless to try and shoot our way out, and replacing our
142 revolvers in their holsters, awaited the outcome. The *Shi'hou*, who by now stood outside the cave yelling and gesticulating with their rifles, were an extraordinary-looking lot. Shorter than the average Arab, they had a much wilder look, with long hair and beards.
• [411] Each man carried a curious little axe, no bigger than a hammer, attached to a long pole. Their faces were rounder and much less Semitic than the Arabs', and of a reddish-brown colour. A few strips of cotton saved them from complete nudity, and their arms and legs were covered with silver rings.

563 The only member of the tribe who wore a head-dress—a strip
609 of dirty white cloth worn in the manner of a turban—stepped forward and spoke to us in the strange dialect of his tribe. I knew some Arabic and recognized one word which, roughly translated, meant 'Come out'. As we left the cave and stood before him they yelled more wildly than before, no doubt demanding our blood as the price of violating the sanctity of their hills. The headman silenced them and began to jabber at us violently, gesticulating fiercely with his hands. After five minutes of this haranguing, he seemed to realize that we did not understand him and glared at us impatiently.

486 'What about the *ghuli chit*?' Stanton whispered in my ear, and
563 I suddenly remembered the pass which the Sheikh of Sharjah had provided me with. This was a piece of paper, headed with the

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

perfume and tobacco. He then took us by the hand and led us through the courtyard into the guest chamber. A terrace of black marble steps led up to it, through a little brass-studded door, which he unlocked. The chamber was a typical Arab interior. Shiraz and Turkish rugs covered the stone floor, and the furniture consisted of a Moorish-type table, inlaid with mother-o'-pearl, a cane settee, and a few plush-seated chairs. The walls, however, were not plain as were those of Sheikh Sultan's palace; leather saddles of sheepskin, decorated with red wool fringes, hung from iron hooks; there were numerous photographs of the sheikh and his relatives, as well as a small armoury. This included an old flintlock gun, a German Mauser pistol (presented to the sheikh by King Ibn Saud, from whom he bought his horses), a .22 Martini rifle, and a long hiltless battle sword in a black leather scabbard, richly decorated with bands of damascened gold.

Raschid showed us his armoury with great pride, and explained in detail the history of each exhibit. He then took the battle sword from the wall; it was at least five feet in length and, as he withdrew the blade from the scabbard, he gave it a quick twist with his wrist. The blade shivered and sang like a tuning fork. I tried to do the same but the sword was exceedingly heavy to handle and I failed to get any 'tune' out of it. Raschid told us that the sword was forged for his ancestors at Damascus four hundred years ago, and was a sword of honour. It had been used in battle, as a two-handed weapon, and was reputed to have slain a hundred men.

The sheikh's little son, Abdul bin Hamid, wore a curved Muscat dagger of great beauty, the scabbard and hilt being of chased gold. We sat on cushions on the floor, and were joined by the sheikh's elder son, aged eleven, and a four years' old girl, a black-eyed little mite with pigtails, who was evidently a great favourite of the sheikh's. She wore a little tunic of silk taffeta, richly embroidered short silk trousers and sandals of gazelle skin; her bare ankles were covered with silver rings. She looked thoroughly spoiled, and had the manner of an autocrat, screaming shrilly at her brother whenever he dared to touch her rag doll.

Hussein, the wazir, entered the chamber with a secretary and some other relatives of the sheikh, including an elderly uncle from Baraimi, and after we had exchanged greetings and washed our hands in the silver bowl, slaves were summoned to bring in the dinner. It was rather early for a meal, and we had not long since

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Trucial Oman MK4

and Ghāfiri political factions (see Chap. VIII, p. 240), the former being Sunnis of the Maliki sect, the latter virtually Wahabis, though not of the militant order. Modern rifles are widely distributed both in town and country, but the traffic in arms has now been virtually suspended (cf. p. 247).

Industries and Trade

The most important industry is pearl-diving, which in summer employs most of the able-bodied men with more than 1,200 boats; though during the winter some of the divers take part in the ordinary fisheries (the second great industry of the coast), the majority take their ease, retained by the pearl-boat owners and contractors, by whom they are supported through the slack season. Agriculture employs the settled population of the interior; vegetables are raised by irrigation from wells in most places, and dates are also grown, though they seldom fully ripen S. of Ras el-Kheimah. Cereals only succeed in a few favoured spots such as *Sīr* in the Shameilīyah district. The live stock of the villages consists of camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep, and goats; horses are rare. The Bedouins subsist chiefly by their herds. In winter, when there is pasture, they roam far and wide; in the hot weather they gather about the more abundant wells, such as those of the *Jiri* plain in the N., and *Beinūnah* in the W.

Pearls are the most valuable export, and are sent almost entirely to India from the port of Dibai. The oyster-shells from which the pearls are taken come next in importance; it is questioned whether the practice of selling these, instead of at once returning them to the sea, may not in the long run tend to exhaust the pearl-banks. Dried fish are exported from Abu Dhabi.

The imports in order of their value are: grain and pulse, from India and Persia; cotton piece-goods from India; dates and date-juice from 'Irāq; coffee, chiefly from India; sugar, from or through India, and miscellaneous provisions from Persia. The only steamship port is Dibai, but the other coastal towns are used by native sea-going boats running to and from India, Persia, and 'Irāq. Inland trade with the Bedouins is of no great volume, but Trucial Oman shares that of the Bireimi oasis with the Sultanate. The coast between Ras Musandam and Abu Dhabi was formerly used as a base by smugglers of arms, bringing rifles and ammunition from Sohār through Bireimi, and loading for Persia and El-Qatar either at the coastal towns, or at lonely spots between them. Within recent years it was necessary to warn the Sheikhs of 'Ajmān, Shārjah,